(b) if so, whether it is a fact that he stated *inter-alia* that it will take 200 years to wipe out poverty;

(c) what is the basis of his statement and whether this statement is at variance with the stated position of Government; if so, the reasons therefore; and

(d) the other points he made in the statement?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) to (d) A book entitled "India Untouched: The forgotten facer of Rural Poverty" written by Dr. Abraham M. George was released by Hon'ble Finance Minister on 6th September, 2004 in Chennai. Hon'ble Finance Minister had *inter-alia* pointed out the decline in the quality of the delivery systems, and how state intervention had stifled the spirit of enterprise and initiative in the villages. He went on to commend the Constitutional amendments which introduced Panchayati Raj and called upon both the Central Government and the State Governments to devolve functions and funds upon Panchayati Raj institutions.

Termination of Employees of Escorts Group

1992. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether some companies of Escorts Group in Faridabad and elsewhere have arbitrarily terminated the services of employees without terminal benefits;

(b) whether Government have conducted a thorough inquiry into the affairs of companies of this Group and taken action against the management so far; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.